DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 127 009 PS 008 694

AUTHOR Thomas, Stanley B., Jr.
TITLE Meeting the Needs of Children in the Next Decade "From the Viewpoint of Government."
INSTITUTION Department of Health , Education, and Welfare, Washington., D.C. Office of the Secretary.
PUB DATE 28 Apr 76
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Child Welfare League of America, Inc. Annual South Pacific Regional Conference (21st, Reno, Nevada, April 28, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Child Rearing; *Child Welfare; Community Service Programs; *Early Childhood Education; Federal Aid; *Federal Government; *Government Role; Parent Participation; *Speeches

ABSTRACT

Emphasizing the competition developing for HEW funds, this speech discusses the future role of federally funded programs to meet the needs of children. Reference is made to the conservative vs. liberal debate over the role of government in providing family services. For child advocates, it is proposed that the most critical part of the controversy centers on the question of the effectiveness of human services programs and particularly child services programs. Agencies must convince Congress and the general American public that their programs are having a positive effect. The social and political impotence of children is considered, as is the question of who should dominate childrearing practices: the family or the government. The importance of parent and community involvement in decision-making is stressed, and the development of different programs for the needs of different communities is recommended. The importance of working for a particular community and gaining its support is seen as the way of achieving an effectiveness that is recognizable by both those providing funds and those being served. (SB)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
OFFICE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED127009

Remarks By

Stanley B. Thomas, Jr.

Assistant Secretary for Human Development

Meeting the Needs of Children in the Next Decade
"From the Viewpoint of Government"

Before the

Child Welfare League of America, Inc.
21st Annual South Pacific Regional Conference

Reno, Nevada

April 28, 1976

PS008694

IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE FOR ME TO MEET WITH A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ARE SO GENUINELY DEDICATED TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN, AND THEIR FAMILIES.

TODAY, I WANT TO EXPLORE WITH YOU WHAT I SEE AS THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE, PARTICULARLY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S ROLE, IN MEETING THOSE NEEDS, AND THE PART I FORESEE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PLAYING IN THE FUTURE.

SUFFICE TO SAY, ANY DISCUSSION OF THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN FAMILY LIFE, -- OR AS SOME WOULD PUT IT, GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE -- CAN STIR UP MORE CONTROVERSEY THAN JUST ABOUT ANY OTHER SUBJECT.

ON ONE HAND, WE HAVE THOSE WHO FEEL THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

SHOULD BE TOTALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN. FREE DAY CARE, FREE HEALTH CARE, FREE LUNCH -- FOR ALL CHILDREN -- PAID FOR BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

AT THE OTHER EXTREME WE FIND THOSE WHO ADVOCATE NO GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION AT ALL, OR IF THERE IS INTERVENTION, THAT IT BE LEFT TO STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO HANDLE -- AND PAY FOR.

PART OF THE CONTROVERSY FOLLOWS IDEOLOGICAL LINES, CONSERVATIVE VS. LIBERAL, OR WHAT EVER LABELS YOU WANT TO USE.

PART OF THE CONTROVERSY IS CAUSED BY THE FACT THAT THE SERVICES COST MONEY -- A LOT OF MONEY.

BUT I THINK, FOR US AS ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN, THE MOST CRITICAL PART OF THE CONTROVERSY CENTERS ON THE QUESTION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS AND PARTICULARLY CHILD SERVICES PROGRAMS.

IN MOST CASES, WE HAVE NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE IN DEMONSTRATING THE IMPACT OF OUR PROGRAMS ON CHILDREN, AND ON SOCIETY. DO WE REALLY MAKE THAT MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE?

THIS IS A KEY ISSUE, AND ONE I WANT TO RETURN TO AFTER BRIEFLY GIVING YOU MY PERSONAL VIEW OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN PROVIDING CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES TO THE LEAST ADVANTAGED CHILDREN IN OUR SOCIETY. THE HEAD START PROGRAM AND THE MEDICAID EARLY AND PERIODIC SCREENING, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT PROGRAM ARE GOOD EXAMPLES. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO PLAY AN IMPORT ROLE IN TRYING TO SOLVE PROBLEMS AFFECTING CHILDREN THAT ARE CLEARLY NATIONAL IN SCOPE. THE CHILD ABUSE AND NECLECT AND RUNAWAY YOUTH PROBLEMS BEING GOOD EXAMPLES.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ALSO HAS RESPONSIBILITY — THROUGH RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION -- TO DEVELOP GOOD CHILD DEVELOPMENT MODELS, AND THEN TO MAKE THOSE MODELS AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHO ACTUALLY DELIVER THE CHILD CARE SERVICES.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO ENCOURAGE PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN BOTH DEVELOPING AND IN DELIVERING SERVICES.

AND FINALLY, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD ACT AS A PARTNER WITH THE STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, WHO ULTIMATELY DELIVER THE SERVICES.

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES, AND ALL HUMAN SERVICES FOR THAT MATTER, ARE OPERATING AND FUNCTIONING IN WHAT I WOULD TERM AN INHERENTLY CRITICAL ENVIRONMENT -- AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO OPERATE IN THIS CRITICAL ENVIRONMENT FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

HOWEVER YOU LOOK AT IT, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SIMPLY CANNOT CONTINUE TO INCREASE SPENDING EACH YEAR AS IT HAS -- FOR LETS SAY -- THE LAST 10 YEARS. WE MUST REALIZE THAT RESOURCES ARE LIMITED. WE CANNOT AFFORD THE ILLUSION THAT WE CAN SPEND OUR WAY OUT OF OUR SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

CONGRESS AND THE GENERAL AMERICAN PUBLIC ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE SENSITIVE TO INCREASED FEDERAL SPENDING. HEW'S BUDGET ALONE HAS GROWN FROM $90 BILLION IN 1972 TO $140 BILLION IN 1977. THIS GROWTH IS OF SUCH MAGNITUDE THAT IT HAS TO BE LOOKED AT, AND IS BEING LOOKED AT BY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, BY CONGRESS AND BY THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. WE ARE BEING ASKED, WHAT IS THIS MONEY BUYING? AND QUANITATIVE ANSWERS ARE NOT ENOUGH -- THE FACT THAT WE SERVED X MORE CHILDREN OR X MORE ELDERLY IS NOT RESPONSIVE TO HARD QUESTIONS BEING ASKED.

CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WANT TO KNOW WHAT IS DIFFERENT THAN IF WE HAD NOT MADE THAT INVESTMENT AT ALL. AND THESE QUESTIONS ARE NOT GOING TO GO AWAY. THE AMOUNT OF DOLLARS AVAILABLE IS LEVELING OFF, AND THE COMPETITION FOR THE REMAINING AMOUNT IS GOING TO BE INTENSE. I DON'T SEE THIS AS A POLITICAL ISSUE. THE QUESTIONS ARE GOING TO REMAIN AND THE COMPETITION FOR THE AVAILABLE RESOURCES WILL REMAIN -- WHETHER WE HAVE A REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

WHAT DOES THIS NEW ATMOSPHERE MEAN FOR HUMAN SERVICES, AND PARTICULARLY FOR CHILD WELFARE SERVICES? IT MEANS THAT SOME OF THE EXPECTATIONS WE HAVE CREATED HAVE NOT AND WILL NOT BE MET. IT MEANS THAT WE MUST BEGIN ADDRESSING SOME OF THE HARDER ISSUES, BECAUSE WE ARE QUICKLY MOVING TOWARDS THE TIME WHEN OTHER PEOPLE, NOT SO SYMPATHETIC TO HUMAN RESOURCE PROGRAMS, ARE GOING TO BE RAISING THE SAME ISSUES. IN THE

COMPETITION FOR THE RESOURCES, THOSE WITH THE BEST ANSWERS, THOSE WHO CAN MAKE THE BEST CASE FOR BOTH THE VALUE OF THEIR PROGRAM'S RESULTS AND THE COST EFFECTIVENESS WITH IT PRODUCES THOSE RESULTS -- THOSE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO WILL WIN.

THIS MEANS THAT WE MUST CLEARLY ARTICULATE AND CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE THAT THE INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN IS A GOOD INVESTMENT. WE MUST CLEARLY DEFINE WHAT HAS BEEN DONE AND WHAT CAN BE DONE. YOU AS ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN HAVE A MORE DIFFICULT TASK AHEAD THAN THOSE WHO SPEAK FOR SOME OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS. FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS MUCH EASIER TO DEMONSTRATE RESULTS IN THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM THAN IT IS IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT. A DISABLED PERSON IS REHABILITATED, THEY GET A JOB. THE RESULTS ARE EASY TO ARTICULATE. DEFINING THE OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT IS FAR MORE COMPLEX. WE HAVE TO DEFINE WHAT IS

GOOD CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND THEN WE ASSURE WHETHER IT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AND THEN BE PREPARED TO DEFEND AGRESSIVELY THE EFFICACY OF THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE INVESTMENT.

YOU ALSO HAVE A HARD ROAD AHEAD BECAUSE CHILDREN ARE PROBABLY THE SINGLE MOST SOCIALLY AND POLITICALLY IMPOTENT GROUP IN THIS COUNTRY TODAY. TOTALLY ASIDE FROM THEIR LEGAL, STATUS AND ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON THEIR PARENTS, THEY LACK BOTH THE CAPACITY TO CONCEPTUALIZE AND THE ABILITY TO ARTICULATE THEIR NEEDS AND CONCERNS SO AS TO AFFECT POLICY FORMULATION AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES. SOCIETY HAS TENDED TO PAY MUCH GREATER ATTENTION TO ITS OTHER, MORE VOCAL ELEMENTS, AND AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE NEEDS AND CONCERNS OF CHILDREN HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED ONLY SLOWLY, AND OFTEN ONLY WITH THE ADVENT OF SOME FAIRLY DRAMATIC

CRISES. ADULTS ARE THEN FACED WITH ATTEMPTING TO DEDUCE WHAT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF AFFECTED CHILDREN.

THIS SOCIAL IMPOTENCE TENDS TO DELAY RECOGNITION NOT ONLY OF PROBLEMS IN GENERAL, BUT ALSO OF PROBLEMS IN SPECIFIC SITUATIONS. THE LATTER IS FURTHER COMPOUNDED BY OUR LONG-HELD VALUE OF RESPECT FOR THE INTEGRITY AND SANCTITY OF THE FAMILY, FOR THE PRIVACY OF ITS INTER-RELATIONSHIPS.

AGAINST THE TRADITIONAL VALUE OF OUR RELUCTANCE TO INTERVENE DIRECTLY IN FAMILY LIFE IS EMERGING A SENSE OF THE SOCIETAL INTEREST WE ALL HAVE IN THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF ALL OUR CHILDREN. THIS SOCIETAL INTEREST IS BEGINNING TO ASSUME THE PROPORTIONS OF A NATIONAL, (I.E., FEDERAL), RESPONSIBILITY, AT LEAST IN RHETORIC IF NOT YET IN REALITY.

I HAVE SERIOUS MISGIVINGS ABOUT EVER DECIDING ON A NATIONAL LEVEL THAT ONE OR THE OTHER MUST TAKE PRECEDENCE. AND I AM PERSONALLY CONVINCED THAT NOT ENOUGH THOUGHT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE IMPLICATIONS OF INCREASING THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN THE REARING OF CHILDREN. YET

CLEARLY SOME INTERVENTION IS NECESSARY PARTICULARLY WHEN ABUSE OR NEGLECT OF THOSE CHILDREN OCCURS.

THIS IS A PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE QUESTION FOR IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY CLEAR TO US THAT WE DO NOT KNOW ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO RECONSTRUCT COMPLETE AND FULFILLING ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN TOTALLY OUTSIDE THE FAMILY. WE DO NOT KNOW ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO SAY THAT ANYONE OR ANY INSTITUTION CAN DO A BETTER JOB OF RAISING CHILDREN THAN THE FAMILY, EVEN IF WE HAD UNLIMITED RESOURCES TO POUR INTO THE RECONSTRUCTION.

IF WE ACCEPT BOTH THE CRITICALLY INFLUENTIAL ROLE THAT PARENTS PLAY IN THEIR CHILDREN'S FORMATIVE YEARS, AND THEIR PRIMACY IN DETERMINING THEIR CHILDREN'S BEST INTEREST, WE MUST NOT ONLY ACCEPT BUT ACTIVELY SUPPORT THEIR INTEGRAL INVOLVEMENT IN ANY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR

CHILDREN. AND WE MUST ENSURE THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISIONS WHICH SHAPE THOSE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES. THOSE DECISIONS, THEN, MUST BE ACCESSIBLE TO THEM AND TO THE COMMUNITY. PARENTS MUST BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE DECISIONS ON BOTH WHO SHOULD CARRY ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES, AND HOW THESE ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT -- DRAWING ON THE EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS AND EDUCATORS, BUT PARTICIPATING AS EQUALS.

THE QUESTIONS OF "WHO SHOULD DO IT" AND "HOW IT SHOULD BE DONE" HAVE NO SINGLE ANSWER -- AND I DOUBT IF THEY EVER WILL. THE ANSWERS ARE COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON THE NEEDS, THE DESIRES AND THE CAPABILITIES WITHIN COMMUNITIES -- AND FOR EACH COMMUNITY THERE MAY WELL BE A DIFFERENT ANSWER, THOUGH THERE ARE DEFINITELY SOME PARAMETERS TO THE CONSIDERATION OF EACH COMMUNITY'S OPTIONS.

WHATEVER IS CREATED, THERE MUST BE COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE FINAL DECISION AND FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION. THE COMMUNITY MUST BE ABLE TO FEEL THAT ITS PROGRAMS ARE RESPONSIVE, EFFECTIVE, AND A WISE USE OF ITS RESOURCES. IN THE INCREASING COMPETITION FOR THOSE RESOURCES, PROGRAMS WHICH DO NOT HAVE THIS SUPPORT WILL SOON FIND THEMSELVES FOUNDERING -- NEED I REMIND YOU OF THE NUMBER OF FAILING SCHOOL BOND ISSUES LATELY? BUT THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT GOES BEYOND THE ACQUISITION OF RESOURCES, TO THE HEART OF THE WHOLE NOTION OF COMMUNITY AND AN INTANGIBLE SENSE OF PARTNERSHIP, OF BELONGINGNESS, OF SHARED PRESENT AND FUTURE, WHICH GENERATES A KIND OF INFORMAL IMAGINATIVE COMMITMENT TO SEEING THAT THINGS WORK, TAKING SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT GOES ON AROUND YOU AND AMONG THAT GROUP OF PEOPLE AND SET OF HUMAN INTERACTIONS YOU CONSIDER YOUR COMMUNITY. WITH THAT KIND

OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT, A PROGRAM COULD HARDLY FAIL -- REGARDLESS OF WHETHER IT IS TOUCHED BY THE HAND OF FEDERAL FUNDING!

IN RECENT YEARS WE HAVE BEGUN TO SEE THE DEMISE OF THE "BIGGER IS BETTER SYNDROME," FOR WE HAVE REALIZED THAT WITH IT COMES STANDARDIZATION AND RIGIDITY. THE IMPORTANCE OF FLEXIBILITY IN HUMAN SERVICES/HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED, FOR WITHOUT FLEXIBILITY A PROGRAM CANNOT RESPOND TO THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF THE WHOLE PERSON.

THE NEED TO EXPAND PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS UNDER THE PRESSURES OF RELATIVELY STABLE AVAILABLE RESOURCES WILL LEAD INCREASINGLY TO MORE COMPREHENSIVE LONG-RANGE PLANNING FOR ALL THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN, AND MORE EFFECTIVE INTERLINKING OF THE RESOURCES WHICH ALREADY EXIST.

THE NEED TO SHOW RESULTS WILL OF NECESSITY GENERATE THE DEVELOP-

MENT, BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN CONCERT WITH THE STATES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, OF MORE COMPREHENSIVE IMPACT MEASURES. IN THIS RESPECT, CONSTANT INPUT FROM ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THOSE YOU REPRESENT WHO ARE CONCERNED WITH CHILDREN AND MEETING THEIR NEEDS IS VITAL. YOU ARE AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE TO US IN DEALING WITH THE ISSUES AHEAD, FOR YOU HAVE THE EXPERIENCE AND INFORMATION TO SHARE ABOUT THE PROBLEMS IN CHILD WELFARE WHICH KEEPS US IN TOUCH WITH REALITY.

WE CLEARLY WILL COMPLEMENT ONE ANOTHER AS LONG AS WE RECOGNIZE THAT WE ARE PURSUING THE SAME GAOL BUT HAVE DIFFERENT ROLES TO PLAN AND DIFFERENT REALITY CONSTRAINTS TO CONTEND WITH. YOU SHOULD EXPECT US TO REMAIN OPEN AND INTERESTED, TO CONSULT YOU ON IDEAS AND ISSUES FOR FEEDBACK, TO QUESTION YOU ABOUT THE REALITIES OF WHAT WE ARE

DOING. TOGETHER I THINK WE HAVE A GOOD CHANCE OF MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE FOR OUR CHILDREN.

THE COMING YEARS OFFER A VARIETY OF CHALLENGES IN AGENDA OF MEETING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN IN THE FUTURE. THE REFUSAL TO ACCEPT SECOND-RATE STATUS FOR OUR CHILDREN IS A CRITICAL INGREDIENT IN CHANGING OUR SOCIETY. THIS CHANGE CAN AND WILL COME ABOUT IF THE PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELVES, COMMITTED TO QUALITY, CONCERNED ABOUT THE WELFARE OF YOUR FELLOWMAN, CAN CONTINUE TO CONFRONT THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE WITH IMAGINATION, WITH ENERGY, WITH FLEXIBILITY FOR CHANGE AND WITH AN UNYIELDING DETERMINATION TO EXCELLENCE. AND IN THAT PROCESS, I WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO FACE THE FUTURE WITH YOU. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.

***